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Investigative Hearing before the
The Government Reform Committee's
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice,
Drug Policy and Human Resources

Testimony of Randy Riley, Clinton County Commissioner

Presented before the Committee at Wilmington College



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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am delighted to be here today representing Clinton County, OH; a traditional, rural county, which is currently going through the leading edge of what is anticipated to be a significant growth period.

The city of Wilmington, county seat of Clinton County, has been classified as a micropolitan area; with a population of over 12,000 people. The remainder of the county is comprised of seven incorporated villages, ranging in size from just a few hundred residents to well over four-thousand people. There are thirteen townships in Clinton County. The total population for the county is just over forty-thousand. Almost half of the county residents live in the townships, outside of the incorporated areas.

Clinton County, because of our location and transportation infrastructure, is a rapidly growing area. Several industries and business have recently moved here. We anticipate significant growth in the next few years. With the anticipation of population growth, also comes growth in crime.

Methamphetamine use in Clinton County has already reached the crisis level. Law enforcement officials throughout the county are spending a considerable portion of their time dealing with the consequences of the ever growing methamphetamine problem.

But, the problems surrounding the increased use of methamphetamine in this rural community go far beyond law enforcement. Lives, lives that could be active and productive, are being lost to this insidious drug. Children whose parents are caught-up in the methamphetamine trap are abused, neglected and are being raised in an extremely dangerous environment.

Meth is called "poor man's cocaine" for good reason. The ingredients are available locally and it is not difficult or expensive to make.

When discussing the most highly addictive, life destroying drugs, most people generally think of heroin and cocaine. Now, we must add methamphetamine to that short list. But, there's a big difference.

Heroin is not grown in North America. The poppy fields of Southeast Asia are half a world away. Efforts to halt the growth and distribution of heroin are ongoing, but those efforts are taking place far from Clinton County.

Cocaine crops South American countries certainly find their way to the United States. But, the growth and initial production of cocaine takes place a continent away. Efforts to halt the growth and distribution of cocaine are ongoing, but those efforts are taking place far from Clinton County.

However, with methamphetamine, we have an entirely different, more complex and much more devastating problem. We know that most of the large, bulk production of methamphetamine takes place in Mexico and the Southwestern portions of the United States. The drug is then shipped and distributed to addicts around the country.

Bulk production is certainly a problem, but in this area it is the small “mom and pop” cookers that are wrecking havoc with the lives of our citizens.

Unlike heroin and cocaine, which comes from distant countries, everything you would need to make methamphetamine is available right here in Clinton County. *Within a half a mile of where we sit, we could find everything we need to start a lab, make enough meth to get high and enough to sell to make some money to make another batch.*

You can even go on the internet, select a search engine, type in “How to Make Meth” and you will find a website that lists all the necessary ingredients and in eleven short pages clearly describes two different methods of methamphetamine production. There is even a “Frequently Asked Question” section for cookers who may be having problems.

I have spoken to several local law enforcement officials and pharmacists about the situation. One solution keeps coming up. We have to make it more difficult to get the ingredients. Ephedrine and Pseudo ephedrine must be more difficult to obtain. There needs to be a tracking system to find out who is buying Ephedrine and Pseudo ephedrine, when they are buying it, where they are buying it and where they live. When it is discovered that one or two people who live with or near each other are all buying Ephedrine and Pseudo ephedrine, we must be able to take legal action and, very importantly, we must be able to protect the children who live in those highly dangerous environments.

Methods must also be explored to see if ways can be found to track the other ingredients, which are too readily available in our community.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, methamphetamine, besides destroying the lives of users, is also destroying the lives of innocent children and has become a major law enforcement and societal problem right here in Clinton County. We welcome any help you can give us in dealing with this problem.

Thank you.